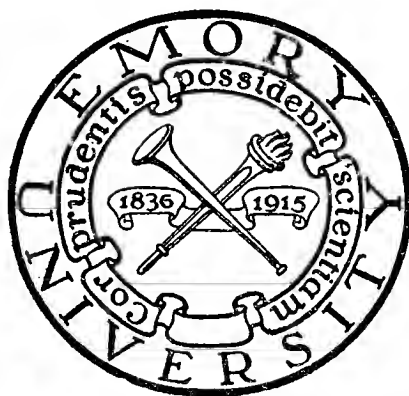


ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
OF THE NEGROES IN LIBERTY, COUNTY, GEORGIA

—
Annual Report

ROBERT W WOODRUFF
LIBRARY



ELEVENTH

ANNUAL REPORT

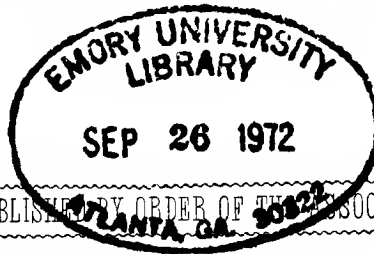
OF THE

ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

OF THE

NEGROES,

IN LIBERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA.



PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Savannah:

OFFICE OF P. G. THOMAS,

1846.

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REV. CHARLES C. JONES.

NOTE.—In consequence of many and unavoidable engagements, this Report has been withheld from the Printer to the present time. Since its delivery, January 21st, the meeting in Charleston has been repeated, and a Committee appointed to digest for publication a plan for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States. That plan will be prepared as immediately as time and circumstances will permit.

C. C. J.

Riceboro, Liberty County, Geo., May, 1846.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1845.

ANOTHER year has rolled over us. The great drought which has rested upon the earth, has been but an emblem of the spiritual drought which has rested upon our Zion. Yet the mercies of God, abounding beyond our expectations, and immeasurably beyond our deserts, demand of us gratitude and repentance, and resolutions of greater fidelity and devotion in time to come.

LABOURS OF THE YEAR.

REV. JOSIAH S. LAW'S REPORT.

The Rev. Josiah S. Law has continued to labour half his time among the Negroes, and the following is his report which he has furnished for the use of the Association. "Agreeably to the arrangement made by you in the beginning of the year 1845, I have performed Missionary labour at *North Newport* and *Hutchison* for half my time during the Winter and Spring months, and for two-thirds during the Summer and two of the Fall months. Though I have been enabled to give one-third more labour for six months to the people, yet I cannot say that I have seen any change for the better, from the year previous. As then, so now, are we without the converting influences of the Holy Spirit. There have been but twelve inquirers under my instruction at North Newport during the year, and all these, with the exception of *two*, were inquirers of the last year. At Hutchison, I have had no inquirers. In view of the great want of success in preaching to the people, as it respects the conversion of souls, I have been constrained to ask again and again, what is the cause? I have never had larger, and on many occasions, more attentive congregations at the stations. I have some Sabbaths, gone home rejoicing in the conviction, that the good work of the Lord was about to commence among them, but at the very next

meeting all seemed cold and lifeless. I have made this state of things a matter of humble prayer before God. It has caused me to prepare my sermons with greater care, selecting those subjects which I thought best adapted to their religious state, but so far, to all human appearance, all has been in vain. "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Doth His promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Nothing but the remembrance of "the years of the right hand of the Most High" can comfort and sustain the labourer in the vineyard of Christ under these circumstances. I have conversed personally with some of the most exemplary christians among the people, and they seem to be fully aware of the state of religion and mourn over it. One of them remarked, "What will become of the people? For the more light you give some of them, the farther off they wander in darkness." It is an encouraging thought that in the midst of the general declension in piety, there are some who feel for the backslidings of Israel, who mourn over the spiritual desolations of Zion. May their numbers increase until a strong cry shall ascend to heaven, "Oh Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years: in the midst of the years make known: in wrath remember mercy."

North Newport.—Referring to my memorandum book, I find that the attendance at this Station has been as good as in former years. The Sabbath School remains the same as last reported with the exception, that there is now in the School a much larger number of beginners, this being their first year in the Sabbath School. These new comers are tell-tales as it respects who have and who have not Schools on their plantations. The exercises of the Sabbath Schools have been as heretofore: with the addition that since I have become the Pastor of the Church at this Station, I have, with the colored members, attended to the discipline of the Church, by which means, offenders are immediately brought up, and cases of discipline prevented from multiplying, and I think, since the adoption of the plan, I can see some improvement.

Hutchinson.—At this Station the congregation varies from one to two hundred persons. I commenced a Sabbath School at this Station the first Sabbath in June, with twenty Scholars, a few of them were Scholars belonging to other Stations. At the next meeting, which was the

fourth Sabbath in June, I had fifty Scholars: but at the next, the second Sabbath in July, there were only twenty five, and the School has lingered ever since. Upon inquiry I find that some object to the children of the Plantation going to School for fear of their being made sick by the walk: and one Plantation which is quite convenient to the Station and which would afford a goodly number of Scholars, does not send any, because, if the children that are large enough to go to School, attend, some of the adults would be compelled to remain at home and take care of their infants! I have ceased preaching at this Station for the present, in consequence of the building in which we have been accustomed to meet, having been taken down. But so soon as the new house of worship, which the Planters are now erecting, shall be completed, our meetings will be resumed. The new House of worship is located in a very pleasant grove of pines immediately on the road, and opposite the site of the former one.

One or two facts respecting the increasing interest that is felt abroad on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes, will close this report. In May last, I attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, called by the Southern and South Western Baptist Church, to take into consideration the expediency of separating from the Baptist Churches in the non-slave-holding States, and forming a distinct organization for Missionary purposes. Among other interesting and important matters brought before the body, was the Religious Instruction of the colored population. I was highly gratified to witness the feeling and interest manifested. The Convention unanimously passed a resolution instructing the Board of Domestic Missions to take all prudent measures for the Religious Instruction of our colored population. From this Convention I went to Forsyth and attended the Georgia Baptist Convention. During the sittings of this body, the subject was brought before it on the Report of the Committee on the state of Religion, in which report, a plan of Religious Instruction, similar to that in this county, was recommended. There was strong opposition by one or two laymen to the plan, but none to the giving Religious Instruction simply by preaching. I found all the Ministers with whom I conversed, strongly in favor of the proposed plan, and though that part of the Report was stricken out, yet they resolved to carry it out, as far as practicable, among the people for whom they laboured. Since the meeting of the Convention,

I have learned with pleasure, that the Central Baptist Association in this State at its last meeting, recommended to the Churches composing it, to find out and adopt the best plan for giving Religious Instruction, orally, to the colored people. The Pastors of some of these Churches are now actively engaged in carrying out the recommendation : and from their known faithfulness and perseverance, I have no doubt much will be accomplished by them. The cause is certainly moving onward. The Lord is for it. Who then can be against it ?

JOSIAH S. LAW."

STATIONS.—The Stations regularly supplied with *Preaching and Sabbath School instruction* have been *five* : namely, Midway, North-Newport, Pleasant Grove, Sunbury and Hutchison. For our mutual convenience, in the early part of the year, as intimated in Mr. Law's Report, we divided the Stations, so that *two*, North-Newport and Hutchison were served by him, and the remaining three by myself. The Sabbath Congregations at the three Stations, have maintained their usual fulness sobriety and order, with ordinary but no uncommon attention to the preached word.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.—The average attendance at Midway has been 74 : at Pleasant Grove, 86, and at Sunbury 82 : and North Newport until relinquished to Mr. Law, 130, making a total average at these Stations of 372. These Schools have been going regularly through with the new *Historical Catechism*, which I am now preparing and correcting in the Schools. We have advanced in the Old Testament History as far as the Book of Exodus : and the interest has been gratifying especially among the larger scholars and adults. I have connected with this *Historical Catechism*, a section every Sabbath, of the *Doctrinal Catechism*, and so carry forward both at the same time. It would facilitate instruction were it possible to separate the younger from the older scholars and adapt the method of teaching and the truths taught more particularly, to their different ages and state of advancement. We have not been able heretofore to do this for the want of assistants in the work. I hope to have prepared, in a short time a Catechism of sufficient length *designed for and adapted to very young children*, from five to ten years of age. When this Catechism is prepared, we may then divide the Schools into two classes, the first class embracing the younger children, and the second, the older children and adults.

OTHER SABBATH SCHOOLS CONDUCTED BY MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.—We have the happiness to report an increase of these Schools over the number of the year previous. The first Report is from,

The Walthourville Sabbath School.—"Our School commenced last Spring at the usual time with 81 Scholars and 14 or 15 Teachers. The number of Scholars increased to 120. The average attendance about 100. There has been some falling off in attention among the adult males. The women and the children and the youths of both sexes, have appeared as much interested in the school as at any former period. Let us who are Masters take a little more notice of our Servants on the Sabbath, examine them as to the manner in which they spend the day: requiring them to visit the School, and our classes would be filled and no doubt greater good would result to the cause in which we are engaged.

Oliver Stevens, Superintendent."

My annual visit to this School was on the 12th of October and in consequence of a funeral in the neighborhood the attendance was the smallest that had been during the season: the number present 60. I carefully examined the School on the ground passed over and the examination was exceedingly well sustained and gave assurance not only of the aptness of the Scholars but also of the care and fidelity of the Teachers, who were manifesting their accustomed zeal in this good work. The next report is from,

The Jonesville Sabbath School.—"The Sabbath School at Jonesville for the religious instruction of the Negroes, was re-opened early in June, and continued without interruption until the middle of October. The average attendance was as good, if not better than usual: the number of Scholars, varying from 45 to 60 and upwards. There was one Teacher to about every 8 or 10 Scholars. The book used was *Jones' Catechism* and the progress encouraging.

John M. B. Harden, Superintendent."

My annual visit to this school was on the 14th of September. The number present between 50 and 60: and I found the Scholars prompt and perfect in their answers: the Teachers much engaged and the School more flourishing than in past seasons.—The third report is from,

The Gravel Hill Sabbath School.—"Our School commenced on the first Sabbath in May and continued until the first Sabbath in November. The number of Teachers 6

and of Scholars from 30 to 40 and upwards. The most of them appeared anxious to receive instruction and behaved extremely well in time of School. The last Sabbath was spent in examining them from the beginning to the end of the Catechism, the most important questions being selected. The white congregation present were astonished at their promptness and correctness of their answers. Since the commencement of the year two of our Scholars have been received into Midway Church and one or two are now under serious impressions. Our prayer to God is, that they may all be speedily converted to Him.

W. E. W. Quarterman Superintendent."

My visit to this School was on the 19th of October. Over 30 Scholars were present, with their Teachers. The Sabbath before, the School had finished *the entire Catechism*, an interesting fact and I examined briefly upon the whole Catechism and was highly gratified with the readiness and intelligence of the Scholars. It appeared to me that the Teachers had every encouragement to persevere. The fourth report is from,

The Midway Sabbath School.—This School is a continuation of the regular School at this station, and is conducted by my brother, *Mr. Henry H. Jones*. Of the School as conducted by himself, two Sabbaths in three he remarks: "The School at Midway of which I have had charge since February last is in a prosperous condition. The attendance from 40 to 100 Scholars: the average attendance about 60. Parents as well as Children seem to desire a knowledge of the word of God. The number of Adults who take part in the exercises is frequently almost as great as that of the Children. The attention manifested and the progress made afford encouragement that God will not permit his work to come to nought."—The effect of his effort has been very much to revive the School and to increase the interest of Adults in it, who have come out in considerable numbers, when he has met with the School. Could we have the Schools at Pleasant Grove, North-Newport, Sunbury and Hutchison, opened on the Sabbath, between our regular appointments, in the same manner, much good would be done to the Negroes and much valuable assistance afforded the Ministers who are labouring statedly for them. Are there not some young men in our Churches who are strong and in whom the word of God abideth, willing to engage in this work: willing to undergo self-denial that God may be

glorified? we can do no more than pray the Lord to send forth labourers into his vineyard. The fifth report is from,

The Colonel's Island Sabbath School.—"This School was commenced by Mrs. Jones assisted by Mrs. King at the School House on the Island and held two Sabbaths in three for the accommodation and the benefit of the Plantations in the immediate neighborhood and continued from July to November. The hour of meeting was at 11 A. M. and of dismissal at 1 P. M. The number of Scholars 80, one half of whom were Adults. They were divided into eight classes, two taught by the Ladies themselves, and the remaining six by the children of their families. The School was opened with singing, reading the Scriptures, recitation of the Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer: after which the classes separated under their respective Teachers, the lesson in the Catechism, and the Hymn for the day were taught and explained. The whole School was then assembled and examined together on the lesson: the Hymn repeated and sung: a suitable Tract or Sermon read and finally the School was dismissed with singing. The attendance of the people was voluntary; their improvement satisfactory, and their sobriety and order without the least interruption although no gentleman was ever present at any one meeting."

In how many parts of our county might not similar Schools be established by pious and energetic females, which would confer blessings upon thousands ready to perish? And how many Mothers might, by the blessing of God, in this manner, bring up their sons and daughters to self-denying labours and cultivate in them that benevolence of heart which would fit them for stations of eminent usefulness in the church and in the world? We should covet for our children that honor which cometh from God. That man is truly great, who, in his station in life, is truly useful. Good actions live, when all nature dies. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Adding these five Schools—or four, if the one at Midway be considered a continuation of the regular School there:—to the three at the Stations already noticed, and to the two conducted by Mr. Law, and we have *Nine* Schools in operation during the year with an average attendance of 647 Scholars and 34 Teachers. May we not indulge in feelings of gratitude at the number brought under the most efficient means of instruction which we can employ for our

coloured population? Shall all the seed thus sown in young and susceptible minds be lost? Shall the many fervent prayers offered to God by pious and engaged Teachers receive no answer from the Lord? We dare not believe it. Though fruit appear not to reward our labours now, yet we will in faith, "cast our bread upon the waters for we shall find it after many days." I have not ascertained the exact number of owners who stately instruct the children and youth on their own Plantations. Would that this duty were more generally felt and performed.

PLANTATION MEETINGS.—I have visited during the year twenty one Plantations: but in consequence of a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs I was not able to complete the half of my usual Plantation preaching and instruction during the Winter and Spring. Repeated attempts followed by relapses determined me to cease for a time. If health be granted I hope to accomplish the usual amount of labour on Plantations the present year. The experience gathered from long acquaintance with our field of labour, convinces me more and more of the great utility and necessity of Plantation meetings. I grant that, it is, when diligently pursued a laborious and self-denying service, and one attended with much exposure to health. Yet these are not sufficient reasons for its neglect. The necessity for this service is laid in the following facts, namely:—there are many old and decrepid negroes who are unable to attend public worship: and there are many worldly persons and even church members who habitually absent themselves from the house of God, except perhaps on Communion Sabbaths. This is very frequently the case with suspended, excommunicated and apostate church members. There are many, old and young, who from year to year do not hear the Gospel except when it is preached on the Plantations where they reside. How shall all these be reached if Plantation preaching be laid aside? Besides, the catechising of children at their own homes and addresses to parents: and special appeals to Christians and impenitent persons, awaken attention, impress duties and reprove sins; and the word of the Lord is often blessed if not to conversion, then to conviction, and the result is, that religion and morality are sustained and strengthened on the Plantations and our Sabbath Congregations and Schools are more punctually and fully attended. And let me add another fact: Plantation meetings are one grand means of interesting Masters and

Mistresses in the instruction, the eternal well-being of their own people, and of prompting them to a more conscientious discharge of all their duties to them. I have not the most distant conception that the simple preaching of the Gospel on the Sabbath alone, at the Stations would have produced the impression upon this community, both white and black, which we have for some years past seen, had Plantation meetings never been resorted to. One of the earliest, most quiet and efficient means of awakening an interest in the religious instruction of the negroes in the bosom of owners, and of impressing the negroes themselves with its importance and value, was Plantation preaching.

INQUIRERS.—The average number at Midway has been *eight: two* belonging to the Pleasant Grove congregation have been received into that church. At Sunbury we have had scarcely any inquirers. The admissions to all the churches, of both white and colored persons, have been very few during the year.

The proper instruction and management of persons professedly under serious impressions, is, in the circumstances in which the people are placed, one of the most difficult parts of our duty: and one upon which we are seeking for wisdom continually. It is not to be questioned that such persons are in great danger either of losing their impressions, or of entertaining a false hope. They see their Ministers, frequently not over once in three weeks; few have the opportunity of waiting on the instruction of intelligent white members. They consequently come under the influence of watchmen and colored members, who, however honest and sincere, are from want of knowledge, experience and discrimination inefficient guides. Moreover, these distressed souls, unable to read the Word of God and to search for themselves and receive light from the great fountain itself, pay implicit respect to their Teacher whoever he may be. He becomes their all and in all. They believe that he knows, that he can lead them in the way everlasting: from his authority they would not dissent: from his instructions they would not depart. They are disposed also to entire submission—to yield both mind and conscience to his will: for their inward peace of mind, and assurance of being in a state of salvation and their admission to the privileges of church membership, depend in large measure upon the approbation and recommendation of their instructor. For a time they are kept under a course of instruction, and taught to repeat questions

and answers and to relate experiences, and to fill up a round of prayers and attendance upon meetings. The colored instructor we may say, is doing his best to fulfil his duty: but the mind of the enquirer is frequently diverted from *the power* to *the form* of godliness: and with accelerated step should he be received into what the black people call "*Society*": that is, received among the members of the church on a particular Plantation, or in a particular district, as one of them—"a mourner," or "a follower" or "seeker"—one under instruction for the church, but not in full fellowship, because not yet examined, received and baptized. It is to be feared that many after being thus admitted into "*Society*"—deem their state good and thenceforward, until they become members of the church, do no more than conform to an outward morality and secure the requisite information for a successful examination. Their reception into "*Society*" is honestly designed by the watchmen and members, for their assistance and benefit. It is, doubtless, so blessed to many inquirers. This arrangement touching inquirers seemingly the best that can be made in certain situations does not, however, obtain in all churches. It is to such sort of instruction—defective in frequency and in character, that we must attribute a large portion of that nominal christianity which prevails among them—no greater in extent, I believe, than would prevail among any other people similarly circumstanced. What remedy shall we propose for this evil? Some reply—"forbid black teaching: abolish watchmen altogether—they are blind leaders of the blind." Admitting *the power*, I scruple about *the right*, on our part. Upon what ground of reason or scripture may we forbid a man from conscientiously and to the extent of his ability, communicating knowledge, purely of a religious character, which is sought for and needed by his fellow man for his eternal welfare? And who may doubt that such knowledge *is* communicated in multitudes of instances in sufficient purity and measure by one colored person to another, for the salvation of the soul? I am as confident that God uses this agency extensively to the salvation of souls among the negroes, as I am that He uses any other. Admitting *the right*, I scruple about the *practicability of exercising the power*. Watchmen have long existed: they will in some form continue to exist. In all societies some men possessing greater knowledge, zeal and popularity of manners and excellency of character, than others, will become leaders

in fact, whether they are made leaders by any *official act* of the societies in which they move or not. They may not desire to exercise either influence or authority, but the necessities of the people and their continual resort to them, will oblige them to do both. Besides, there are some Watchmen in the Churches who are men of great piety and fidelity, whose lives are exceedingly useful and who cannot be spared. All attempts to suppress this class of influential men among their own colour have signally failed and must continue to fail, as every reflecting man must see for himself. Who ever saw any society in which all the members were upon a perfect level? What remedy then shall we propose? Appoint the best men to be had to the office of Leaders or Watchmen, and by careful instruction and supervision qualify them for usefulness. Appoint also, willing and competent white members as instructors: and fix some suitable period of time for the instruction and trial of Inquirers. Our churches have endeavoured to proceed in the manner indicated, but with feeble efficiency. Our watchmen are not sufficiently attended to:—nor have our Committees of instruction done much for several years past.

It is exceedingly desirable that all the Churches adopt substantially the same management in respect to inquirers. For the Churches to say they will receive none but those who come recommended from their committees of instruction, and they are few or no committee men at all to act, is virtually to shut the door upon all who would seek to enter in. And again, for the Churches to fall into the very convenient custom of receiving individuals to membership, chiefly upon the recommendation of watchmen, is highly injurious to the interests of religion. Certain it is that the Church which makes the terms of its admission the easiest, will have the greatest number of members; and of course, the greatest number of unworthy members. This whole subject, demands most serious and prayerful consideration.

PRESENT STATE OF RELIGION.—The year has been marked by a general good attendance at the House of God, and occasionally good attention to its sacred services. We have had nothing like a Revival, and the state of religion has been better the first half of the year, than the last. There has been much coldness among the watchmen and members, and too frequent neglect of public worship and plantation prayers. I have as in former years, performed a number of *marriage ceremonies*: two only in the Churches

on the Sabbath. There is a growing impression of the sanctity of this relation, both among the people and their owners. I have also attended a number of *funerals*, and some have died in the triumphs of faith. The State Thanksgiving Day, February 13th, was observed by us at Pleasant Grove. The Planters with few exceptions, gave their people the day and we had an overflowing congregation and a day of order and solemnity. I have endeavoured in various ways—in dependence upon the Divine blessing—to awaken a deeper interest in religion. Sermons have been preached with special reference to the state of the Church: and meetings of members and watchmen called from time to time and much prayer offered and exhortation given. Sabbath, April 20th, we set apart as a day of fasting and prayer at Midway. Three of the white male members attended and took part in the exercises with us. The morning was spent in reading the scriptures, in prayer, singing and exhortation. In the afternoon a sermon for the occasion was preached. The congregation during the day was large and solemn, and our exercises were closed by an Inquiry meeting.

To maintain religion among an educated and enlightened people, requires the constant prayers and labours of God's ministers and people, and from time to time, a resort to means, sanctioned and enjoined in the word of God, but which may be denominated, extraordinary; such as days of fasting and solemn convocation, &c.: for the tendency of human nature, and even that which we believe to be under the control of grace, is downward to corruption and spiritual death. But in the instance of educated and enlightened people, they may be considered as possessing some conservative power within themselves. They have a higher standard of character to maintain: they are under greater responsibilities and exert a stronger influence over each other in the way of restraint and encouragement: they have their own qualified instructors: they have access to the word of God and the productions of pious minds and the records of the state and doings of the Church at large: they are subject to appeals to their piety, zeal and benevolence from abroad: and so, "by reason of use, they have their senses exercised to discern both evil and good." How different is the case with our negro population! They possess within themselves, almost no conservative power at all. I forbear to present the contrast: I add only, that they are in large measure, dependent upon other agencies

than their own for support and advancement, and in proportion to their ignorance and degradation is their exposure to decline. The moment the minister ceases to bear them on in a knowledge of truth and righteousness, they cease to advance. When he stops they stop. When his mouth is closed, the pure word of God is closed, except so much of it as may be retained in their memories, or imperfectly communicated by their own teachers. Where ignorance prevails, the spirit of man becomes an easy prey to objects of sense. The power of godliness is sacrificed to the form: the form itself degenerates into vanity, and then bigotry, fanaticism and lasciviousness sweep in like a flood. The religious instruction of the negroes, like that of all other ignorant and degraded people, is a laborious work if faithfully attended to. When once commenced, however good the advance and however fair the prospect, there can be no relaxation of effort, without exposing all to imminent danger. The members of this Association and of this community must not suppose that the great work of the religious instruction of the negroes in this County is *done*: or that it has advanced to such a state, that it *cannot recede*. Such an opinion could spring only from ignorance of the nature of the work and of the character and condition of the people. Without constant vigilance and well directed and sustained efforts, we should shortly see the present privileges which they enjoy of assembling together for worship on the Sabbath at the stations, and for social worship on their own Plantations during the week, sadly abused, and sobriety, order, morality and vital godliness, greatly degenerated among them.

PROPORTION OF NEGROES THAT ATTEND PUBLIC WORSHIP.—The population of Liberty County by the census taken for the State in 1845 is as follows: Free Whites, 1,854. Free Negroes, 24. Slaves, 5,493. The Tax Returns for 1844, give 4,729 Slaves: of which number, 4,212 are in the 15th District: 125 in the 16th and 392 in the 17th District. Some Planters do not make their returns in the County and a number of negroes are over age and are not returned at all. This may account for the difference between the State census and the County returns of taxable slaves, say 764. Of these slaves, I suppose about 4,880 are located in our District, the *Fifteenth*. In this District 25 miles long by 15 broad, are *Twelve* Houses of Public Worship, namely, *Sunbury, Midway* (two) *Mount Olivet, North-Newport, Pleasant Grove,*

Jonesville, Walthourville, (two) Hinesville, Gravel-Hill and Hutchison. I estimate the seats in these several churches for the accommodation of the negroes at 2,000. From November to May, we have between *five* and *six* places of worship opened on the Sabbath, with an average attendance of 8 or 900. From May to November, we have the same number of places opened for worship on the Sabbath, and three other places are opened for reading and prayer by the white male members of the churches, and they conduct colored Sabbath Schools and give instruction to the negroes: the average attendance may now rise to 1,200 or 1,300.—*At least one third are children.* *This class* of attendants, we may consider an entire gain since we commenced our work among them, and a gain of twice the number of adults and youth. Our churches are opened in different parts of the District on different Sabbaths, so as to *accommodate and bring the Gospel within reach of the whole population.* It would be impossible to locate two, or even three churches, so as to put them in convenient reach of the whole population either white or black, as the people are spread over so large a territory. The distances to the churches would be too great for many. Having the churches thus located, although we have not above *one sixth* in Winter, and *one fourth* in Summer, of the negroes present on the Sabbath, yet as the churches are opened in succession, in the course of one, two and three weeks, all who choose to avail themselves of the blessings of the means of grace, have the opportunity of doing so.

In the great duty of attending the public worship of God, our Negroes, are very like mankind in other parts of the Christian world. Some are extremely regular: others irregular, and others again never perform that duty at all. The neglect of public worship on their part, notwithstanding the improvement in past years, and which I think through the influence of Sabbath Schools, is still going on, has been matter of great concern to me, for which I have sought out *reasons*, and have endeavoured also to find a *remedy*.

The distance at which many live from the places of worship, prevents them from coming very frequently, while others are detained by *age and infirmity*. Some fall an easy prey to *indolence*. They are more disposed to lounge away the Sabbath at home, than make an effort to prepare for worship and walk a short distance to it. Through *waste and improvidence* they neglect their own clothing and

their childrens', and having nothing whole or clean, they satisfy themselves with that excuse. Others embrace the day to *visit* their friends socially or for business purposes. The visiting is not done ordinarily on the Sabbath, but on Saturday evening, and they return home on Sabbath evening, or Monday morning. Others spend the day in *strolling* about the fields and swamps and woods with their dogs, after more honest people have gone to Church, and sometimes commit depredations upon cattle and hogs and sheep. Such misconduct must be regulated by the police of the County. But the great reason, is *indifference to religion*. Were the spirit of the Lord abroad amongst us with his convicting, converting and sanctifying influences, all other causes for the neglect of His worship in His sanctuaries, would lose their power. We never had such overflowing congregations as during the period of revival from 1838 to 1841.

Within my knowledge there is not a Planter in our District of the County who interposes the least obstacle to the attendance of his people on public worship. So far from it, it is the desire of every one that his people should attend. Nor do I know of any Plantation upon which the work is so weighty as to unfit the people for public worship. The labour of the negroes ends with the evening twilight : in a vast majority of cases, even in Winter, before the sun is down : and universally so in the warmer seasons of the year, and for weeks together, they have as their own, hours of sunlight every day. There are cases of exception in particular seasons and in particular kinds of work, but they are infrequent and continue but a short time. We have no *night* work. Cotton cultivation does not require it. From the close of the labours of one day to the beginning of the labours of another, the time of the people is their own. I know of no Planter who is so indifferent to the Law of God, or to the good opinion of his fellow-citizens, or to his own character and interests, or to the happiness of his people as to *allowance them on the Sabbath day*. Nor do I know of an individual that requires any labour from his people on the Sabbath beyond ordinary and necessary attention to stock and household duties. The plantation people are all at leisure, and the family servants take turns to remain at home on the Sabbath.

So far as the feelings of the Planters, and the labours of the people are concerned, there exists no ground for their neglect of public worship. But do we not see this neglect

in all labouring and mechanical classes, and that just in proportion to their ignorance and degradation. Take for example seamen, mechanics and day labourers, in shops and factories, especially in large towns and cities where they are congregated in sufficient numbers to form societies of their own : and what multitudes never darken the doors of a Church ? The Sabbath is their day of rest, of recreation and enjoyment, and they are at home with their families, or abroad luxuriating in forbidden indulgences, and in freedom from occupation and care. It is a problem in benevolence not yet solved, how shall these masses ever be brought under the sound of the Gospel on the Sabbath day.

I am, however, far from believing that owners are free from blame. The evil may be *remedied* in part. They have both influence and authority. Christian owners should lay before their people the advantage and necessity of public worship, and express their earnest wish that they should attend, and see that no excuses on account of clothing or any other thing within their power to amend, should exist with them. I do not say *use authority*. Coercion would involve an immense amount of care and perplexity, would do no good and ultimately would have to be abandoned. Something must be left to the agency of those who have come to years. There is a limit to the responsibility of owners on this head. But with the *children and youth*, I say, *use authority*, as much so, as with the children and youth of your own family. And if you wish to accomplish much you must *persevere* in your efforts. A few wishes coldly expressed : a few attempts inefficiently made, may satisfy a poor, selfish, inactive conscience. We must go further and be not weary in our well doing, and give line upon line and precept upon precept. I may add that if Pastors would meet with the watchmen and members of the Church : and with the children and youth and give them some instruction and exhortation on this duty and keep it before them, the result would be salutary. I can but commend this subject to the prayerful consideration of conscientious Christians and labourers in this field. We cannot be too solicitous about it, for the faith of the negroes comes emphatically "*by hearing*:" and unless they are found in the House of God the prospect of their salvation is dark indeed ! Much as we may have done to bring our colored population under religious instruction, there remains much land to be possessed.

COOPERATION NEEDED.—From the experience and observation of another year I am induced to lay before you,—what has been done in former Reports—the cooperation which we need that our work may be maintained and advanced.

Pastors may efficiently cooperate by the institution of meetings for watchmen—members of the Church—Inquirers—and children and youth and by affording some special instruction to their colored congregations, at such times and seasons as may be most convenient to them and if necessary call in the aid of prominent Christian men in the Churches.

Masters may cooperate by sending their children and youth regularly to the Sabbath Schools: and by instructing their people at home. If they cannot instruct the adults successfully, by all means let the children and youth be assembled and taught the Catechism, at least once a week, if not oftener. Again, by correcting Sabbath breaking, profane swearing and immorality and fanatical extravagances in the conduct of religious meetings, when such tendency may be observed: and by promoting in a higher degree the physical improvement of their people. Can a man—can a Christian man, who derives his own support and that of his family from the labours of his dependent servants,—yea more, who through them is made partaker of the comforts and luxuries of life, remain indifferent to and neglectful of their condition? Who will lavishly expend hundreds for these comforts and luxuries, and yet grudge a few dollars for the necessities of his servants? Who considers all he obtains from them gain and all he bestows upon them loss? Can such a man hope for acceptance with the great Master in Heaven? Can he even dream of the respect and confidence of his people or expect any influence from his instructions as a professor of Religion, while his practice demonstrates his infidelity? Let such an one know—if he will look no higher—that every thing done for the physical comfort and improvement of his people, promotes health, cheerfulness, fidelity, cleanliness, morality, and thrift, and thereby advances his quiet and prosperity and interest in a high degree.

The physical condition of the negroes has improved in this County and is still improving. By the blessing of God upon the labour of their hands, owners are more able and I trust I may add, by the grace of God in their hearts, they are more willing to promote that improvement than in years

past. But much, very much remains to be accomplished. I am satisfied as a mere matter of economy it is far better for those who are settling plantations with a view to permanency, to put up, in the beginning, the most substantial houses for their negroes and make them as comfortable as possible. If this cannot be done at once, let it be done by degrees. In a few years, as much is lost in time and trifling expenses in putting up and repairing poor houses as would have sufficed to put up at the first, houses of the best kind: the plantation the mean while presenting the appearance of desertion and dilapidation. The best things are most highly prized and commonly most carefully preserved.

In this conviction I can but express, as one deeply interested in the moral and religious condition of the Negroes, my desire for the prosperity of the *Agricultural Society*, recently formed in this County: because I believe that such a Society properly conducted and covering all subjects and objects coming legitimately within its cognizance, must result in good to the labouring class of our population, and be an auxiliary to the work undertaken by this Association. Such Society must promote the intelligence and activity of Planters, lead to experiments and improvements in soils and manures and modes of cultivation and management, induce a more satisfied and *home-feeling*, for finding that they can do well on their present lands, Planters will be freed from that bane of all peace and improvement, *a desire of removal*, and they will consequently take greater pains to have their places better settled and more attractive and comfortable, both to themselves and their people. The formation of Agricultural Societies, in the older settled regions of the South we hail as an omen for good. They have already accomplished much: both Masters and Servants have experienced their beneficial influence.

Every plantation, of ordinary size, ought to have a *Chapel*, or a *room*, fitted up for the accommodation of the people in their social worship. A Chapel adds much to the finish of a plantation even if an owner would do no more than consult appearances. Many funerals do I attend in the open air and most of my plantation meetings are held in the houses of the people which are generally too small, or in plantation houses of one kind and another which are open, cold and uncomfortable. — I have never complained of these accommodations, nor do I now. The Planters have uniformly received me with the greatest kindness, and

made the best arrangements, for the time, in their power. Some have fitted up rooms and others are intending to do so. I have long since settled it in my mind, that the place of the Minister is with the people of his charge: and *wherever* they can and are willing to meet with him, there should he be, and quietly and naturally adapt himself to circumstances. The Divine Master preached every where—in the wilderness, on mountains, in the Temple, in Synagogues, in the streets, on the sea-shore, in private houses, by day and by night: and to all classes and conditions of people.

I will now call your attention to

A REVIEW OF THE WORK IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE PRESENT TIME.

The Religious Instruction of the Negroes has made remarkable and rapid advances throughout the Southern and South Western States during the past year. My correspondence has furnished me, in part, with proof of the fact. Let me proceed to notice the evidences of the progress of which we speak:—

For several years past our country has been blessed with but few REVIVALS OF RELIGION, but during the past year, the Lord has visited the Southern and South Western States in many places, with the gracious outpourings of His Holy Spirit. Let us briefly notice what has come to our knowledge.

Within *Kentucky*, there have been some revivals: in one part of the State, sixty-eight conversions are reported at different meetings: and in another—"a powerful revival and sixteen conversions." The Synod of *West Tennessee*, hold the following language: "The glorious Gospel is preached and with effect—many have been its triumphs over the enemy of souls. The means of grace have been signally blessed with a revival of Religion in several of our Churches, imparting new zeal and activity to their members and adding to their number such as shall be saved. New Churches have been organized: new Church edifices erected: and fields of Christ's heritage once sterile are now verdant with life and beauty." A Minister speaks of one "powerful revival" and another among the Baptists, which numbered "twenty hopeful converts." Although the Synod of *North Carolina* say that "the general aspect of our Zion at present (1845) is unusually discouraging," yet there have been some revivals in other Denominations

in that State. We are told of several hundreds converted in some Counties : of series of meetings in different places and of the smiles of God on these efforts. An individual states that there have been large accessions to the Church in *South Carolina*. The Synod of South Carolina "report a more favorable state of religious feeling than for many years past, and rejoice in the manifested presence of God. In one Presbytery twelve or thirteen Churches have enjoyed unusual interest in religion, and many souls converted : in another, several Churches have received large accessions." The Synod of *Georgia* received returns of additions to the Churches, some twenty-eight, others sixteen, and others, a less number. A Minister writes, "I have never known so general and I may add such powerful outpourings of the Spirit of God, as have been enjoyed in all this region of country. All Denominations have shared in it." One Presbytery reports thirteen Churches: another a goodly number, that have enjoyed in greater or less degree the special presence of the Spirit, resulting in many additions : and still another reports additions, and some from among the Negroes. One labourer in *Florida* witnesses an outpouring of the Spirit, and twelve or fifteen hopeful conversions. Additions have been made "to most of the Churches" in the Presbytery of Florida, and the cause of Christ "prosperes in all its borders." In the *Alabama* Baptist State Convention, mention is made of powerful revivals in some Churches, and accessions to the body of between 3,000 and 4,000. In a Union Meeting of the different denominations near Tuscaloosa, the Spirit of God was poured out in a wonderful manner, and in the City itself, some 200 professed conversion. Other parts of the State had been signally visited, nor have the Negroes been passed over. In Mobile and several places in South Alabama there had been unusual attention to religion and a number of conversions. The Synod of *Mississippi* which includes *Louisiana* also, say that nearly all the Churches had enjoyed seasons of revival: to eighteen over 300 persons had been added. The Methodists and Baptists had been equally blest. "During many of the meetings in the Presbyterian Churches, servants were permitted to attend nearly all the services," and many conversions from this class. "Those congregations in which the Religious Instruction of the Servants had received most attention, shared most signally in the blessing of God, and many Negroes, with members of their Master's family, entered

together the pale of the Church." New Orleans had also been visited: sixteen were added to one Church.

We perceive that the Lord has not been unmindful of our Southern Zion. He has made no distinctions, but poured out his Spirit as well upon Servants as Masters. Indeed in the Conventions, Synods, Presbyteries and Churches, specially blessed, in many cases which we have referred to, the religious instruction of the Negroes had engaged much attention. We must therefore identify the progress of religious instruction with the progress of true religion in the South.

THE ACTS AND DOINGS OF THE DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS
WILL CONVINCE US OF THE ADVANCE OF THE CAUSE.

The Episcopal Church.—By the last Journal of the Convention of the *Diocese of Maryland*, in my possession, it appears that nearly one half the Parochial Reports, embrace Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals of colored persons: and in a few, five or six, some special attention is paid to the negroes in the way of preaching and catechising: there are a few Sabbath Schools, one colored Church in Baltimore: one colored candidate for Holy Orders: and one colored licensed Lay Reader.

Bishop Meade in his report of official acts in the *Diocese of Virginia*, (1845) speaks of confirming colored persons and in his concluding remarks urges the claims of the negroes upon the faithful attention of the Clergy. The assistant Bishop, Dr. Johns reports Confirmations also and several special services which we held exclusively for the negroes—in Town and Country, in which the Bishop appears to have taken great interest. In 46 Parishes (more than half reported) we have records of Baptisms &c. of colored persons: in 14 of these Parishes something efficient is doing in the way of Sabbath Schools and special instruction on the Sabbath or on some day of the week. The Rector of Charles City County, reports "about 40 colored children baptized in one household who were instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion by their Mistress who presented them by request of their parents, and appeared as their Sponsor." Dr Empie from the Committee on the State of the Church brings forward as "a matter of more than common importance—the religious instruction of our colored classes." After speaking of the duty and the benefits, he thus concludes: "If the souls of our Servants as well as our children are intrusted to our care, how shall we answer it to our consciences and unto

God if we do not endeavour to secure to them all the benefits of careful instruction. And since God in his providence has caused *Sunday Schools* to be established for this purpose does He not clearly make it our duty to bring our coloured classes as far as practicable under the religious instruction of Sunday Schools?" Bishop Meade in a very recent letter writes, "Many of our Ministers shew that their hearts are deeply affected with a sense of duty towards the negroes by holding meetings on the afternoon of the Sabbath, either in the Churches or at private houses. In some places Sunday Schools for their oral religious instruction are sustained by members of the Church." — "I have been much gratified at the manner in which all my recommendations whether to the Conventions, or to congregations have been received. The large slave holders are generally those who are most favourable to their religious instruction. In different parts of the State, little Chapels have been built expressly for their use where occasional services are held by the Parish Ministers, or some instruction given by Masters or Mistresses."

In the Journal of the Convention of *the Diocese of North Carolina*, (1845) Baptisms &c. of colored persons are reported in 19 Churches. One Rector has a Sabbath School and another preaches in rotation on week days, on three plantations. The Parochial Reports are deficient in stating the number of colored Sabbath Schools: nor is mention made of instruction given in private by owners. The Committee on the State of the Church remark "among other grounds of thankfulness and other evidences of faithfulness on the part of our Clergy—an increasing attention to the spiritual wants of the blacks."

The Journal of the Convention of *the Diocese of South Carolina*, (1845) furnishes evidence that this Diocese continues to set an example to all others in the Southern States, in its faithful attention to the colored field. We have 31 Parochial Reports and in every one there is special mention made of the negroes: an evening in the week or some part of the Lord's day being devoted to them by a number of Rectors. Nine Rectors preach on the Plantations in connection with their white charges: twenty two have colored Sabbath Schools and classes of instruction: several Catechists labour in conjunction with Rectors, who are in part or wholly, supported by a Society of Laymen formed for this special purpose of employing Catechists and Missionaries for the colored people of the State

wherever they may be needed, under the approval of the Bishop and the Rectors in whose Parishes they may be located. Ten Missionaries are employed in this Diocese who labour in part or altogether for the negroes. From the Parochial Reports, there are 1636 colored communicants, 930 colored children catechized by Rectors and 1454 in the colored Sabbath Schools. More than one half the communicants are colored : and the colored Sabbath School scholars, exceed the white by 450.

There are ten Parochial and one Missionary Report in the Journal of *the Diocese of Georgia* for 1845. Five Rectors have Sunday Schools for colored children and two devote a portion of their time to the negroes on plantations and act as Missionaries. A Mission to the negroes has been established on the Ogechee River.

There are nine organized Parishes in *the Diocese of Florida* : six supplied and three vacant. In two Parishes are Sunday Schools for the negroes. An application was made to Bishop Elliott, Provisional Bishop of Florida, between Monticello and Tallahassee for a Missionary to unite a congregation of whites with services on the plantations for the negroes. The Bishop of South Carolina, at a private residence in this State, baptized 47 colored children.

We have nine Parish Reports in *the Diocese of Alabama*. Three have Sunday Schools and other instruction for the negroes. The Rev'd. N. A. Cobbs has recently been elected Bishop of this Diocese, and without doubt will devote special attention to the great number of negroes who will fall under his charge.

I have no specific information from *the Dioceses of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana*, but presume that the Bishops and Clergy of these Dioceses will not fall behind the zeal and activity of their Brethren in the older Dioceses of the South and Southwest in this good cause.

THE METHODIST CHURCH. — The "Minutes of the Annual Conferences for 1844—1845," give 150,120 colored communicants: of whom 13,546 are in the Free and 135,604 are in the Slave States. The increase of colored Members has been almost entirely in the slave States : for in the 17 Conferences in the free States which reported a colored membership, 11 reported a *decrease* : 3 reported for the year and no comparison drawn with previous years : and 3 reported an *increase* of 23 in the whole ! Besides the attention paid to the negroes by the Travelling Preachers,

there are 84 *Missionaries* devoted to them in the South, having under their care 18,343 Church Members. But this number falls short of the truth as in several Conferences South, the state of their colored Missions was not known when the "Minutes" went to press. There are 81 *Missions* for the Negroes in the M. E. Church *South*: in South Carolina Conference 16: in the Georgia Conference 10: Tennessee 14: Alabama 13: Memphis 10: Arkansas 1: Mississippi 11: North Carolina 3 and Virginia 3. It is more than probable that in all these Missions efforts are made to bring the children and youth under regular Catechetical instruction: we know in some it is successfully done. The Methodists have built and opened a fine and spacious Chapel in Savannah, the present winter, for the accommodation of their colored membership, with a white Minister. The Chapel is called "*Andrew Chapel*" in honor of Bishop Andrew. The South Carolina Conference reports the present year 16 Missions, 210 plantations served by 22 Missionaries: 158 white and 8,723 colored members: 4,426 children under catechetical instruction and in the bounds of their Missions 50,000 souls. The Board of Managers of the Missionary Society of the Conference recommended the establishment of four new Missions, which will require six more Missionaries. Receipts over \$14,000 of which \$11,000 have been expended on colored Missions. They say, "a great and effectual door is now opened before us, through which a ready access may be had without let or hindrance to the vast multitudes of colored people living in the bounds of our Conference." The Conference has 41,074 black communicants: and has drawn up a Report of a plan for the more general prosecution of the work of evangelizing the people of colour within its own bounds, which Report is also to be presented to the *General Conference* of the M. E. Church *South*, to be held in Petersburg Virginia in May 1846.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH.—This church embraces 100,000 colored Members, and we are happy to observe a rapid growth of feeling and action. There are Ministers and Laymen of high influence who are deeply interested in this good work and who will not rest satisfied until steps are taken to improve the character of their colored Membership, and to bring the Gospel to bear more efficiently upon all under their influence: who feel that it will not contribute to the advancement of true religion to leave them so entirely to the instruction and control of Preachers and Watchmen

of their own colour who are for the most part but indifferently qualified for so important a work. There is no denomination upon which rests a greater amount of responsibility in regard to our colored population, because there is no denomination whose influence over them is greater. There are more colored licensed and ordained Ministers and more regularly organized colored churches connected with this denomination, than any other. In all the chief Towns in the Southern States there are colored churches, having their own houses for public worship and ordinarily they are branches of and under the control of the white churches. The following extract of a letter from Rev. J. B. Jeter of Richmond will give the condition and prospect of the work in *Virginia*. "The religious instruction and improvement of our colored population, I am happy to say, is a subject which has awakened among the Baptist Churches of this State a general and increasing interest, within the last few years. Many of our Associations have adopted, some of them repeatedly, reports and resolutions, setting forth the importance of the object—the obligation of the Churches to make provision to promote it: and the most efficient means of securing it.—In many of our Cities and Towns, there are colored churches under the instruction and supervision of white Pastors. These churches are generally aided in discipline by, and in fact are under the control of, Committees appointed by the white churches. It has been found in several instances, that churches left entirely to the government of the blacks, fall into disorder and become corrupt. In this city we have two colored churches. The first was formed three or four years ago. It occupies a very spacious and comfortable house of worship, and consists of more than 2,000 communicants. They are instructed by the Rev. Mr. Ryland, President of Richmond College. The ordinary congregation does not fall below 1,500 and for good order, attention and devotional fervour, it is excelled by none in the city. The singing of the assembly is frequently very earnest and touching. The discipline in the body is strict and wholesome.—In Petersburg and Norfolk there are also, and, I believe, flourishing colored churches, enjoying the labours of good and efficient white Pastors. In the country and small Towns, the blacks are instructed in common with the whites. A portion of almost every house of worship is appropriated for their exclusive occupation. Very frequently a special service is held for them on the

afternoon of the Lord's day. In most of our churches in eastern Virginia, the number of colored members is equal to that of the whites and in some it very far exceeds. I have enjoyed considerable opportunities of marking the influence of the Gospel among this class of people. The members composing the First African Church, except such as have been added since its organization, were for several years under my charge, in connection with the First Baptist Church of this city. I examined probably 1,000 candidates for Baptism. And I am of opinion, that making due allowance for their superstition and the peculiar temptations to which they are exposed, they exhibit a wonderful measure of simple hearted conscientious and fervent piety. There is certainly a rapid increase of religious knowledge among the colored race. It is apparent from this fact—a fact which forcibly struck me when I was accustomed to labour among them. When old persons came forward to relate their religious experiences, they would frequently narrate the wildest fancies—the most extravagant dreams: but the experiences of the young were frequently clear, evangelical and really edifying—generally satisfactory—and rarely if ever, visionary and extravagant. On the whole, the obligation to instruct the negroes is more generally acknowledged and deeply felt than formerly—the best methods of promoting their religious welfare, are undergoing a careful examination—and decided improvements are visible, not only in the manner of instructing them, but in the soundness of their religious views, the seriousness of their worship, and the propriety of their conduct.” Of *South Carolina* Dr. R. Fuller of Beaufort writes me: “I do not hesitate to say that in this State the Baptists are becoming every year more concerned at their solemn responsibility and more anxious to meet it. The great obstacle is the want of Missionaries. I know no cause for which they would contribute more liberally, and on which a Preacher can address them with such instant effect.—Every Association convinces me that both Pastors and people are penetrated with a sense of their duty as to the religious instruction of the negroes, and are putting forth efforts of some vigour in this good cause.” The Baptist Churches in Beaufort, Euhaw, Black Swamp, St. Helena, May³ River, Coosawhatchie, Charleston and other places in the low-country, and in Columbia and a great number of villages and country places in the up-country, embrace a very large colored Communion. Sabbath

Schools are increasing. The subject of the Religious Instruction of the Negroes was brought before the *Georgia Baptist Convention*, and acted on in May: many Ministers and laymen displayed much interest: the *Central Baptist Association* at its last meeting recommended the Churches composing it, to find out and adopt the best plan of giving Religious Instruction to the Negroes: the *Sunbury Association* embraces many colored Churches and some of the largest in the State. There are three African Churches in Savannah with colored Pastors and houses of worship and a total of near 4,000 members. The whole number of colored communicants in the Association cannot now be short of 5,800. There are colored Baptist Churches in Augusta and some other towns in the State, and all the country Churches have a large number under their care. The activity of this Church is increasing, and some young men, soon to enter the Ministry, are directing their attention to this field. Perhaps the *Alabama Baptist State Convention* is in the lead of any other in the Southern States on this subject. Of the meeting of this Body in November, 1845, it is said: "There is manifestly a decided advance in the interest felt on this subject since the last Convention. All the members who spoke, both Ministers and laymen, evinced a deep feeling of responsibility and an anxious desire to promote the spiritual welfare of the slave population. Provision for the stated preaching of the Gospel to the blacks assembled by themselves, is now made by a great number of Churches, and strong desires were expressed to introduce some system of oral instruction, such as is afforded in Jones' Catechism, now in use in the Carolinas and Georgia. Not Christians only, but worldly men were spoken of as anxious for the Religious instruction of their servants." The Ministers and members of the Convention, pledged themselves in a Resolution "henceforth to use all reasonable diligence in their power to improve the moral and religious condition of the slaves within their congregations and families, and to recommend the subject to Ministers and Christians throughout the entire South." The Convention also appointed a Committee of five to prepare or procure a suitable Catechism to be used in the instruction of the people. The *Columbus Association* by a Committee, suggested a most excellent plan for the thorough religious instruction of the colored population—published in their Minutes—and recommended to be read from the pulpits of all the Churches in the Association. The number of

colored communicants in the Baptist Churches of this State is very large. There are two large colored Churches in Mobile. Some Sabbath Schools are attempted : a flourishing one was formed in Tuscaloosa : and the Pastor of that Church, Rev. T. F. Curtis, remarks, "The Religious Instruction of the Negroes is attracting increased attention every month throughout the State. Prejudices are fast dying away." The "*Alabama Baptist*"—the paper of the Denomination of the State, is an untiring and able advocate of the work.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.—The *Synod of Virginia* in October last, reiterated the expression of its abiding conviction of the vast importance of the subject. There are many Ministers within the bounds of this Synod actively engaged and using their influence to awaken the Church to its duty. Some Sabbath Schools have been established and Missionaries employed. The *Synod of North Carolina* in its Pastoral letter, enjoins upon the Churches "to pay special attention to the Religious Instruction of servants." The Presbytery of Fayetteville, at the conclusion of an able report, adopted a series of Resolutions: "that the evangelization of the Negroes is the great duty of the Southern Church, that they are entitled to a proportionable part of Ministerial labour : that masters should instruct their servants : Ministers and Church Sessions should establish classes of instruction and the colored members be reported : that a Missionary be employed and \$500 raised for his support." There are warm friends of the cause in the Ministry and membership the Presbyterian Church in this State. The *Synod of South Carolina*, as is well known, is much engaged, and the labour increases year by year. The Presbyteries of South Carolina and Charleston are now supporting a Missionary to the Negroes, located within the bounds of the former. A standing Committee of the Charleston Presbytery is charged with the oversight of this field as one for Missionary labour. The Churches of Harmony Presbytery are distinguished for their attention to the Negroes. In the Black River Churches, the Negroes are comfortably accommodated and the Pastors devote half the Sabbath to them. Other Churches of this Presbytery are doing well. I am not aware that Sunday Schools are as yet introduced to any considerable extent. They have been established in Charleston, Columbia and some other places. It is exceedingly desirable that they be speedily multiplied. "Upon this subject for years past, there has been a gradual

increase of interest with results far more successful than could have been anticipated. Almost the entire body of Planters on the Sea-coast, have either made provision for the Religious Instruction of their Negroes, or are prepared to give their cordial approval and aid to the efforts of the different branches of the Church to this end. Quite a number do themselves officiate daily as the Priests of their respective households in Chapels provided for their accommodation ; and instead of being weary in well doing, are encouraged to persevere in their work of faith and labour of love."

The Synod of Georgia reported—"the spiritual interests of the colored people have received increased attention : " and upon a discussion of the subject, appointed a committee "to take into consideration the religious and moral interests of our colored population and report to us at our next meeting some plan of extended and efficient operation." The Presbytery of Georgia has digested a plan which it endeavours to carry out as far as circumstances will permit. It has one Missionary exclusively devoted to this field. Colored Sabbath Schools are instituted where it is practicable and also plantation preaching. In the Presbyterian church in Augusta there is a colored Sabbath School averaging 60 Scholars and 9 Teachers. The Pastor of this church preaches once a week to the negroes in the city : and from January to April once a week on plantations around the city. The Presbyterian church in Macon erected a church for the colored part of the congregation and it is supplied with a colored Minister. They have also a Sunday School. At Athens there is one also of 90 scholars and 8 teachers, founded by the energy of one young lady. There is preaching to the Negroes in Washington and a Sabbath School of 80 scholars, I am informed : preaching also at Richmond Baths : also at Roswell and a flourishing Sabbath School. The general rule in country churches is to devote half the Sabbath to them. Sunday Schools have not become universal : plantation meetings, except in certain districts, are infrequent, and so is instruction given by owners. But the interest is rapidly increasing. The language of *the Synod of West Tennessee* is the following :—"The attention of most of our churches has been specially directed to the religious instruction of our colored population : and generally a portion of the time of our Ministers on each Sabbath has been exclusively devoted to them. Sabbath Schools and classes

for catechetical instruction have been and continue in successful operation. The Catechism generally in use, is that which was first introduced in Georgia. In the modes of instruction many of them give wonderful proofs of their power of recollection. In some of our churches, the colored communicants constitute no inconsiderable portion of the aggregate number. And it is cheering to witness their orderly behaviour and the fervour of their piety. In one instance a church has been organized with Elders and Deacons, without any white person except their Pastor. This is an experiment which may or may not commend itself to the imitation of others. It is however gratifying to see prejudices upon this subject giving way and the responsibility of the Master standing out in bold relief. A Committee was appointed in *the Synod of Kentucky* to secure a Missionary to the negroes; "whose duty it shall be to travel through the State and preach to the negroes as he may have opportunity and endeavor to arouse the churches and Ministry to increased exertions upon this subject." A gentleman writing me from this State remarks, "the servants in Kentucky, if I am not greatly mistaken are far superior in intellectual and moral culture to those in the South. The reason is obvious. Here the wealth of our citizens consists mainly in lands and stock, whilst comparatively there are but few slaves. Some of the wealthiest men in this county worth from \$30,000 to 40,000 do not work over 8 or 10 Servants. A necessary consequence is, that the intercourse between the two classes is more intimate, partaking more of the nature of that which exists with old and valued house servants in your State. In all our meeting houses there is ample provision for their accommodation and large numbers of them belong to the various denominations, especially the Methodist and Baptist. Indeed I am compelled to regard their condition in Kentucky as greatly superior to that in any other State with which I am acquainted." The Lexington Presbytery passed a series of resolutions on the subject and pointed out a course of action to be pursued in the instruction of the negroes. *The Synod of Alabama* has for some years been much engaged and the meeting of that body this year demonstrates an increase of interest and action. The subject was brought before Synod by Resolutions from the Presbytery of South Alabama and moving the appointment of a committee "to give the whole subject careful attention with a view to the production of some

plan for the thorough and uniform instruction of the entire class of our coloured population &c." The committee was appointed and brought in an able and valuable report. Most of the Ministers pay some attention to the negroes and efforts are making in some churches to establish Sunday Schools. A Minister writes me, "There appears to be a growing interest in the religious welfare of the blacks. A number have been recently added to the church where I preach. I baptized five or six yesterday."—No warmer nor more active friends of the cause can be found, than we meet with in the *Synod of Mississippi*, which includes *Louisiana* also. Several Missionaries are labouring in different parts of Mississippi. The Presbytery of Mississippi say "our Southern Zion is steadily urging on the work:—The interest in this class is advancing most powerfully and the southern church is in the van of the sacramental host, because she cares for the souls of our negroes &c." This Presbytery reports many converts from the negroes. A Missionary supported by a circle of Planters for the benefit of their own people, writes me: "To no people do I find the same delight in preaching the Gospel. Their very discipline to which they are daily subject seems to fit them for its reception. After native depravity their ignorance seems to be the greatest hindrance to the success of the Gospel. My Sabbath congregations are large, sometimes overflowing: the people attentive and orderly as any white congregation. A number of inquirers: a few hopefully converted. I have two services on the Sabbath—a Sermon, then catechetical instruction. During the week preaching on the plantations every other night. The people are warmly attached to me: the good already accomplished great. About 25 from the plantations I visit have been received into the different churches since my labours commenced and there is at present a general inquiry on the subject of Religion. For all this I thank God and take courage." In distant *Arkansas and Missouri* the work has gone. The Presbytery of Arkansas say, "the religious instruction of our coloured population too, has not been as diligently attended to as its importance demands. This class of our people have weighty and imperious claims upon our attention, which if too long neglected an awful responsibility will fall upon us. We feel it so. Among no class is Sabbath breaking—one of the crying sins of the land—so common as with our people of colour. By proper attention such as we are glad to see

is paid to them in some parts of our church of late, particularly South Carolina and Georgia,—no legal impediments being in our way, their moral and religious character and condition could be greatly elevated and ameliorated. The doing of this, in a great degree, depends upon the Ministers of the Gospel. In one of our churches a large majority of its members are colored people and many of them were received the past year. Regular preaching to them on Sabbath afternoon has been attended to, and the Gospel seems to be greatly prized by them." *The State of Texas* is now added to our field.

The General Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions, has had this field recommended to it, by many of the Southern Presbyteries. The Missionaries of the Board are expected to give attention to the negroes whenever they come under their charge and influence. Fifty colored persons are reported by one Missionary, in the Sabbath School where he is labouring in *Maryland*. Another has been appointed to the colored population in Jefferson County, Florida, the extent and success of whose labours we know not. Another labours in North Carolina and has six congregations of blacks on plantations of our church members. Another was appointed to the colored people in Halifax County, N. C., but for some reason did not serve. May these appointments be multiplied by our Board as fields are opened and laid before it, by our Presbyteries.

MEETING IN CHARLESTON, S. C.—As a further index of the increasing interest, I refer you to the *Meeting* held in Charleston, in May last, on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes, composed of Ministers and Laymen from all Denominations. It was my privilege to attend that Meeting and it was one which for intelligence, piety, zeal and harmony, could not well be surpassed. Its proceedings have been published in pamphlet form and widely circulated, and have exerted an extensive and decided influence on our Southern country, and have contributed to give a permanence and importance to the work in some regions which it never had before. Indeed the amount of attention bestowed upon the Negroes in the State of South Carolina in particular, and the number employed in their instruction, and the good accomplished, and the unity of feeling and approbation developed in the letters and communications made to the Meeting were truly astonishing. The Charleston Meeting is to be repeated the coming February, 1846. I think it altogether desirable that similar Meetings should

be held in the several slave-holding States, that the friends of the Religious Instruction of the Negroes and the labourers in the work may become acquainted with each other and render each other mutual assistance and encouragement, and the amount of what has been actually accomplished be made known and the best plans of action adopted.

CONCLUSION.

Sufficient evidence has now been presented to convince you that the Religious Instruction of the Negroes has advanced in our Churches in a remarkable degree during the past year, and that it is acquiring a prominence throughout the Southern States which its importance has always demanded and which promises to be permanent.

We behold the subject appearing in *the acts and doings of all our Ecclesiastical Meetings of all Denominations*: there is arising a holy emulation in the cause: the field affords ample space for all. We behold *individuals of the highest standing both in Church and State*, not only the open advocates, but most efficient labourers in the work. We behold *all the Religious Journals* in our country—especially those of most note and influence, in various ways calling the attention of the public to it. *Ministers* upon whom the labour devolves are acknowledging and acting more in fulfilment of their duties to their colored charges. *Theological Students* are giving serious consideration to the colored field, and leaving our seminaries with determination to devote themselves to it. Columbia has already sent forth Missionaries into the field: so has Princeton and more are to follow. Prince Edward will not be lacking. *The Secular Prints* appear in favour of our cause: the religious instruction of the negroes is alluded to in private and in public and is taking its place among *the important topics of conversation and thought* with community at large. The public mind is becoming more tender: the impression that “more ought and must be done,” is extending: *Owners* are awaking to their responsibilities: *wide doors of access* to the people, are thrown open. *The melioration of their condition* is perceptible: *the Negroes* themselves rise up and second the efforts for their good. *The Lord blesses our efforts*: they are enlightened, convicted, converted, sanctified, saved! Who can witness all these things and fail to see that the religious instruction of the negroes is becoming—yea, and must become—one of the great and leading benevolent enterprises of our day? Nothing may impede its progress, for we believe the Hand of the Lord our Redeemer is with it.

If any man has put himself to the pains of a little observation, he must be convinced that there is *a turning of the minds of men to this work and duty over all our country*. The North and West have felt the influence of our action. They will feel it more. We are on the great path-way of duty marked out for us in the Providence and in the Word of God. We are on the ground, we know it, we feel it. We surely have hope for the future. The Lord—in whom is all our trust—who has so favoured this cause will continue to do so. This Association should remember that it not only has a responsibility to the field at home which it endeavors to occupy, but that it has a responsibility to the field abroad. We should humbly and fervently pray that God may “establish the work of our hands,” that others may behold our success, not by our own might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and be encouraged to begin and to persevere, in the same good work:—“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make *us* perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in us, that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to Whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen.”